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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the degree to which women faculty and administrators are able to engage in connected knowing and interdependent definitions of self and reality within an institutional environment that values and rewards individualism, separateness, competition, and objectivity. The paper notes that connected knowing is essentially the process of working within groups, investing in empowering others, and focusing on the process rather than the outcomes. Separate knowing, conversely, involves greater isolation of the individual from the group in order to maintain objectivity and the interpreting of relationships hierarchically. Results are presented from interviews with 17 women faculty members and administrators at one state university designed to determine the struggles of these women to remain connected knowers in an environment that most felt supported and rewarded separate knowing. The interviews reveal that, while administrative women seemed more successful at integrating their independence and connected ways of knowing, most women faculty speak of their concern and frustration with this conflict. It is suggested that such conflicts should be considered as important retention and vitality problems for both women and men in collegiate systems. Contains 15 references. (GLR)

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ACADEMIC WOMEN: DIFFERENT WAYS OF KNOWING

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ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held at the Marriott City Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota, October 29 - November 1, 1992. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.

ACADEMIC WOMEN: DIFFERENT WAYS OF KNOWING

Feminist research supports the premise that women experience the social world differently than men (e.g., Bensimon, in press; Kanter, 1977; Keller, 1990). Organizational theorists suggest that institutional culture may significantly influence the way members construct reality (e.g., Bolman and Deal; 1990; Morgan, 1986; Tierney, 1988). These two perspectives potentially conflict when looking at women in a traditionally male dominated organizational setting such as a research university. The purpose of this study is to examine the degree to which, in an institutional environment which values and rewards individualism, separateness, competition, and objectivity, women faculty and administrators are able to engage in connected knowing and interdependent definitions of self and reality.

Theoretical Framework

The research perspective and cognitive framework for this study build on the work of Gilligan et al. (1990) and Belenky et al. (1986). They describe gender related cognitive differences centering on connected and separate ways of knowing. Separate knowers are those who isolate themselves from the group in order to maintain objectivity, who operate from a moral justice perspective, who interpret relationships hierarchically, and who focus on outcomes rather than process. Belenky et al. identify separate knowers as those involved in "the doubting game," taking nothing at face value. By comparison, connected knowers are involved in the "believing game." They have the moral care perspective central to their role enactment, work to maintain group attachments, are invested in empowering others, and focus on process rather than outcomes. Belenky et al. go on to posit constructed knowledge as the cognitive schema that allows for integration of both separate and connected knowing, one that weaves together "the strands of rational and emotive thought" (p. 134) through a continual process of reflective thought. Building on Gilligan's work, Lyons' research in part tends to focus on definitions of self based on ways of understanding the world and one's experiences. The separate self experiences relationships in terms of reciprocity, mediates them through rules and perceives that relationships are grounded in roles that come from a sense of obligation and commitment (Lyons, 1990). The connected self is characterized by an interdependence in relation to others. Relationships are experienced as responses to others in their own terms and are mediated through the activity of care. Relationships are grounded in interdependence that comes from a recognition of the interconnectedness of people. As a result of her work with men and women across life spans, Lyons concludes that both the separate and

connected perspectives may change over time. She also suggests that the men and women in her study drew on both perspectives in answering interview questions yet demonstrated a preference for one perspective over the other. Unlike Belenky et al., Lyons does not fully acknowledge constructed knowledge on her continuum, yet the idea is not antithetical to her premises, and in fact, might enhance the idea of change (or cognitive development) over time.

Throughout her work, Lyons does not focus at length on the implications of the environment or culture in which her subjects were found. Burton Clark's 1972 study of organizational saga suggests that culture plays a significant part in shaping the values and behaviors of group members. In more recent work, Andrew Masland (1985) and William Tierney (1989) reinforce this notion, indicating not only does culture play an important role in how we make meaning in our organizations, but that there are multiple cultures to which we must attend. Culture exists at the institutional level, the unit/department level, and the professional level. Each culture reinforces a set of values, appropriate behaviors, level of commitment and relationships, yet each may not be wholly in sinc with any other. Hence, an individual employee of an organization, male or female, needs to attend to and reconcile several different layers of culture, not to mention those to which one is a part outside the organization - those rooted in family, religious affiliations, etc.

From a cognitive development perspective, Lyons' basic concepts of separate and connected knowers provide an important basis for looking at differences in the ways men and women make meaning. Yet from an organizational perspective, cultural theorists would propose that men and women are equally, and strongly, affected by culture. What becomes interesting, then, is to see if it is possible to benefit from the informed conceptual bases of both the cognitive and organizational frames - to see if culture does, in fact, play an important role in shaping one's perspectives toward others - or are these perspectives derived and maintained apart from a formal organization. Gilligan and Pollack, in their work with physicians, and Jack and Jack, in their work with lawyers, suggest that professional culture significantly impacts on the ways in which men and women construct reality (in Gilligan, 1990). Both studies further suggest that the culture of these two traditionally male dominated professions has a negative impact on women, causing conflict in definitions of self, resolution of moral conflict, and the dilemma one experiences when preferred way of knowing is not reinforced by the culture in which one is professionally engaged.

Following these studies, and using only women, who Gilligan, Belenky and Lyons and others would posit are likely to prefer connected knowing, it seems possible then to pursue the idea of a relationship between academic culture and cognition. Data from

interviews with women at one major research university are used. The research university has long been characterized as male dominated, elitist, valuing separation, specialization, critical thinking, the scientific method, competition for resources, and research. Women (and minorities) are slow to gain access to research universities as faculty and administrators, and slower to be promoted through the system (Moore et al., 1983). In many ways, research universities may be the antithesis of Rich's (1979) concept of the woman-centered university. Rich presented us with mechanisms for change, but it would appear that most research universities (and other institutions) have been slow to change. Given the culture of this kind of institution, it seems an interesting venue to examine the separate and connected perspectives of women faculty and administrators. It is presumed that they all are affected to some degree by a similar institutional culture, that they all are likely to be affiliated with a professional culture, and yet also operate within somewhat different unit/department cultures.

The Setting

At first glance, Swain State University appears much the same as any other research university. Nestled on a rolling hillside, Swain State keeps watch over the surrounding countryside, like a lord minding the manor. Over the years since its founding, Swain State has surpassed the land originally intended for the college, spreading down the hillside into the town below, quietly taking its place among community buildings downtown and purchasing land as it becomes available to be used in various ways for expanding the university boundaries. The process has never been overt; Swain State has been mindful of the landscape of the town of Lanford. If you are not careful, you will not notice the small signs on the front of local buildings indicating they belong to the University instead of to a local proprietor; posters and advertisements for Swain State events are strategically placed among those hung by shopkeepers and Lanford artisans. The presence is physically subtle but definitely felt.

The campus of Swain State University is a mix of old and new. As the college grew to become a university and then to take its role as the flagship institution in a fully developed state system of higher education, the physical plant grew to accommodate a growing number of students and faculty. Architects carefully maintained the facade of original buildings, preserving the appearance of 1860s character while converting the interior space to meet the needs of late 1900s research and teaching. Walking down the main street of campus, one almost feels transported by the academic buildings back to the turn of the century. One small stretch of concrete disturbs the romantic scene - an

architectural answer to needed classroom space gone awry, that sprawls on its side - a reminder to the observer that things are not always what they appear to be.

Swain State University has enjoyed a sound academic reputation over time, having developed many premier programs across its several professional schools and main undergraduate college. In earlier periods of its history, Swain State had a very strong research reputation, pulling in many important federal contracts and foundation grants. Over the years, however, the service mission to the state, changes in faculty and external research priorities/funding, and an ever-increasing undergraduate student population has moderated Swain State's definition of research activity to be more reflective of broadly defined scholarship (Boyer, 1991). Rhetoric of prestigious research standards and publication productivity remain, however, and are reinforced through the annual special merit review process and promotion and tenure proceedings.

As a more general indicator of perceived institutional quality, students, faculty and administrators alike anxiously await the annual publication of the Fiske Report, where all take pride in a four-star rating. The president reminds the proud constituency that such a rating has come from careful academic prioritizing, sound fiscal appropriations, and is grounded in the various traditions of Swain State that everyone has come to know. This year's *Money* Magazine, ranking best educational bargains, failed to name the University as one of the nation's academic "deals for the dollar"; Public Relations staff and the President were ready with the reasons why, however, so that no one needed to feel remorse or concern. As one spokesperson reminded the community, such rankings are very arbitrary and do not reflect the true quality and affordability of an education at Swain State. The crowds appeased, administrators and faculty return to work for another year. Swain State University is rich with tradition, and reinforcing institutional myths and perceptions is part of the lives of many throughout the institution, not just those whose offices are in the administrative building, Ryers Hall.

When one examines the organizational chart of Swain State University, one finds a long-standing tradition of promoting from within to fill mid- and senior level administrative positions. Not that this is an uncommon strategy of research universities (Moore et al., 1983). Over the last twenty years, three women have held senior positions within the administrative hierarchy - two as the vice president and one as the dean of the graduate school. All have since left, two in a flurry and the dean after quite a long tenure with the institution. It is interesting to observe that the two who left quite quickly (each within three years of being hired) came to their position at Swain State from outside the university walls and that the woman who held her position the longest had been promoted through the system after two decades of service to the University. Each vacancy has been

filled by advancing an internal white male candidate usually, but not always, following a rigorous open search process. Those involved in promoting the image of Swain State are quick to point out that the institution now has two academic deans who are women, and not as quick to mention the traditionally female schools of which they are in charge. (There are also two senior women administrators who are responsible for more tangential units.) The minimal representation of women among the thirteen academic deans and eighteen top administrators is not representative of the university student population, although it does reflect the limited ethnic and racial diversity of the students.

By comparison, a recently finished public relations tape used by the university exhibits a clear theme of diversity. Almost without exception, every senior woman or person of color appears in the video. As the vice president reminded the community at this year's opening convocation, Swain State values the diverse perspectives brought to the campus by faculty, students and staff and it is this diversity that will position the University to meet the challenges of the 21st century. In looking around the auditorium at his audience, the vice president could be easily reinforced for his comments. This year, as in most years passed, there are many new female and faces of color in the audience. Some of these diverse faces will still be listening to opening convocations in the years to come, having been promoted through the system; many others will have stopped listening to the message, and still the majority of the rest will no longer be at Swain State to hear the annual words of welcome and institutional commitment.

The system at Swain State University mirrors aspects of bureaucratic, political and anarchic organizations, similar to most complex academic institutions. Central administration says that Swain State is a decentralized university, where implementation decisions are left to the units (academic and administrative) to determine. As is often the case, budgets and resource allocations are centrally controlled, with deans and division heads vying against each other for scant pools of discretionary funding that remain. At the department level, few chairs or directors have control of budgets or budget requests. The communication paper flows from Ryers Hall are constant, reminding faculty and staff of everything from state legislature decisions to religious holiday observances. Faculty senate sends meeting minutes to all tenure-track faculty, although few actively attend meetings. Deans and division heads follow suit, using organizational meetings as clearinghouses for information delivery and supplementing these with regular doses of memos and written commentary. When an issue is of some higher degree of importance, it may be sent around on colored paper or on paper of a different size, in an effort to draw attention to the piece in the myriad paper avalanche. As an example, two years ago, a thought piece on the importance of balancing teaching and research was shared by the

vice president for academic affairs. It was a constructive, insightful document, meant to stimulate faculty interest in working within the academic units to promote a more healthy balance and reward for the two aspects of faculty productivity. The document was a 6x8 pamphlet printed on manila bond paper, all efforts to draw attention to its message. Yet it arrived in mailboxes on a Friday, typically one of the heaviest institutional "junk mail" days, and as a result for many went unnoticed.

This is not to say that verbal communication is not a primary vehicle for information sharing and decision making at Swain State. One need only hang around the men's bathroom in any of the academic office buildings or pass a group of administrators huddled together in a corner to know where the real decisions get made. In so many ways, Swain State University is just like the other universities to which it regularly compares itself.

The Academic Women

Seventeen women faculty and administrators shared in conversations about their work units at Swain State University (eight administrators, seven faculty, and two with split appointments). All were participants in a study of leadership at Swain State, some of the women being the focus of the study while others originally sharing their perceptions of department leaders (see Amey, 1992 for original study). The women have worked at Swain State University for as little as two years to as long as twenty years. Some have built their faculty or administrative careers here, working their way through the system. Others have entered the University community at non-entry level, either as assistant directors who had worked previously at other institutions or as faculty who had taught in some other setting prior to coming to this campus. Some work in departments chaired by men, and others in units led by women. They represent a broad spectrum of characteristics in terms of experience, marital status, and family responsibilities. The race/ethnic diversity of this group is narrow yet reflects the broader Swain State community; only two women of color participated and both were early in their careers at Swain State.

In talking with and listening to these women share their experiences and thoughts about life at Swain State University, what became very interesting was the different degrees of connection and connected knowing expressed by the women. It was originally the intent of this paper to share the feelings of these women about issues of connection in three areas: connection with a larger organizational purpose/direction (the department, school or university); connection with communication and decision making; and connection with others inter- and intra-departmentally. However, in writing the story of

women at Swain State, it became impossible to separate their perspectives into three categories in the same way that the women themselves had difficulty separating their lives from each other and from the institution. Therefore, what is included here is an attempt to capture the struggles of these women to remain connected knowers in an environment most feel supports and rewards separate knowing.

Common Issues of Connection to the University for Women Faculty and Administrators

Almost without exception, the female faculty and administrators made reference to the institution and how "the ways things are here" affect them. One director expresses the thoughts of many when she says, "Everybody is aware of the public nature of the institution and how their behavior affects that." Another woman moving through the administrative ranks reflects upon the environmental press affecting the institution that in turn, impacts her unit: "We're [institutionally] doing about as well as we can nationally and statewide. Everything we learn says educational institutions are in a bit of trouble. [Swain State] is in better shape than most but we're not going to fly as high as we once did for awhile." The women speak of believing that there is an institutional sense of purpose that guides the behavior of those in Ryers Hall, yet at a more operational level, most of the women do not see a clear relationship between university goals and their own work. " They say we aspire to be a research university but it is not part of the mission - it's just rhetoric. We're not set up that way...you're always surprised at how well we do, almost in spite of institutional practices," offers one department chair. Reflections such as "there is only so much that you can do in a system this big" and "the need to build coalitions" in order to be effective were comments made by both administrators and faculty women.

The way in which people interact and that information is shared at Swain State is also a theme that consistently emerges in the discourse of women administrators and faculty. For example, almost every woman mentions the amount of memo-writing that goes on at Swain State, most of which they find unnecessary and not their own preferred way of gathering or sharing information. "Memos are a waste of time though we write them. Communication is much better within the office itself," says one associate director. And most of the women agreed with both her assessment of the institution's preferred way of sharing information and the contrasting style within departmental units headed by women. Women across departments see the mass of paperwork as a vehicle for protecting oneself, especially from and for more senior administrators, and say they prefer not to send memos except when absolutely necessary. "I try not to write a lot of

memos. Earlier in my life I wrote a lot of memos. Since then, I've found that memos are regarded as papertrailing and I try to avoid them," shares one director. Women faculty and administrators all prefer face to face conversations and interactions for sharing information and decision making, although some had found it necessary to adapt their behaviors to accommodate the different institutional way of knowing. Thinking about changes in her own behavior, one faculty member says, "I'm not as nice as I used to be. I [have had to become] more comfortable with challenging and more comfortable with voicing ideas even if they conflict..."

Although they seem to recognize the complexity of the university system in which they work, women speak of feeling apart from a central core of the university, division or school. A faculty member in her fifth year with the university sighs when she says, "I am really isolated from the rest of the university." One associate professor comments on the connection of her department with a larger institutional whole when she says, "I'd like to see us a little better integrated into the university...I'm really the only one who does anything institutionally." Feelings of neglect, disinterest, and laissez-faire leadership styles of those in positions of authority are shared across academic and non-academic departments. "I report to the [chief academic officer] who I would say treats us with interested, benign neglect," offers one administrator. "I mean he doesn't tell me what to do, he doesn't do very much for me, and he's interested in how we are doing. He doesn't give us much." In a similar vein, one faculty member shares, "We don't have a very intense link to [the college administration]. They don't pay a lot of attention to what we do. Maybe nobody's interested..." Generalizing the problem of connection with those in authority, one associate director summarizes the situation at Swain State in this way: "The leadership style is fairly consistent throughout the institution - fairly independent, individual, people don't want to lead each other but just want to provide an arena in which people can lead themselves or at least strike out on their own. In some aspects this is positive...on the other hand, it also has led to a lot of misperceptions ..."

Connected Knowing and Faculty Women

Even as the perceptions of lack of a common university/unit connection are shared by administrators and faculty, the effect seems to vary almost exclusively by position - whether a woman is a faculty member/academic administrator or whether she is a non-academic administrator. Faculty women seem to be more bothered by the lack of connection than administrative women, especially when it occurs at the department level. For example, one full professor expresses desires to be connected to students and colleagues yet feels institutional policies separate people in her department and college

rather than support collaboration. Junior women from two departments share common feelings of separation from colleagues: "They just expect that I'll figure it all out myself somehow...who is there to really go to for help? I have no one to share things with..." and, "Being the only junior faculty member is very isolating." A fifth year faculty member adds, "I have no real colleagues in my department anymore...they don't know or care what I do, really. [The chair] is never here." A second full professor seems to recognize a trade-off between connection and separation when she observes that, "We get to self-determine a fair amount, but there are consequences of that [personally and professionally]." She did not choose to elaborate on the consequences further.

In addition to feelings of separation from a larger institutional or departmental sense of purpose, women faculty express great frustration with the conflict between their desire to be connected and the perceived press to be separate knowers perpetuated by the institutional reward structure. "I have conflicts with the merit system," says one assistant professor. "This is a very competitive system." As one woman thought over her ten years at Swain State, she remarks, "I have become more blase/jaundiced with time in the job." This is particularly true for faculty at the assistant and associate ranks, who are still working towards professional and institutional advancement goals. These goals and the criteria for meeting them emphasize separate knowing rather than connected knowing as evidenced through reinforcement for individual rather than collaborative work (in either teaching or research), increased academic specialization or uniqueness, and, most often, traditional research guided by scientific methods and quantitative design. The goals and criteria also guide the major decisions for faculty women at Swain State, including how they spend their time and often with whom they choose to spend time. As an example of the apparent confusion caused by institutional press for separate knowing and personal preference for connection, one associate faculty member/department chair responded to a question about her interaction with others in her department this way, "...I encourage faculty to tell me their frustrations...I prefer to talk to people...I don't invite them to come in and chat, they stand at the door...I'm too busy and they know it...I try to make it clear that I want to hear about problems before others do...I have to get my book done this spring." This same woman, commenting on her own professional development, indicates that the greatest concerns, "are the problems with being an associate faculty member and chair." She went on to explain the difficulty with finding time to work with others in the department while trying to maintain her own research agenda.

Another example comes from a junior woman who indicates that the colleagueship among her departmental peers and the prospect of team teaching were two of the important factors in her decision to join the faculty at Swain State. Yet, in another

thought, she shares that, "...the best thing that has happened has been [the department chair] releasing me from teaching and committees and departmental things in order to get writing done. Had he not done that, I would not make it - I am hardly making it now." What were originally primary motivating and decision making factors (emphasis on connection) had become inhibitors to fulfilling job expectations (emphasis on separation). Another assistant professor in her fourth year, recognized for the time she spends mentoring students in and out of class, shares that she has finally recognized, "..the only thing that matters is publications. Forget about teaching and working with students." When asked how this realization makes her feel, she sighs, "Lousy. But nobody cares about that. It's just the publications. So I guess that's what I have to do." This same instructor shares concerns about her department's valuing of her qualitative research. "The guys will just die, you know. They crank everything through the computer and, well, this just isn't like that. I've got some chapters going and some day, there will be 'the book,' but it'll be interesting to see what they say. It's just so different from what they do."

Perhaps not surprisingly, the faculty member who articulates the clearest examples of connected knowing in spite of institutional pressures, as well as the most examples of constructed knowing, is a long-standing full professor. Even so, in her reflections, we hear the struggle to balance her desire and "earned right" to move beyond the confines of institutional agendas with the feeling of responsibility to those more junior members coming behind her in the system:

> I want my salary to be where it should be but I don't want it to come off the back of the young people I have enthusiastically recruited in, who are also doing productive things...it twists my own work in many ways in that I find myself pursuing topics that lend themselves to large scale work - to fund students -...I am really more out for me - for my interests now - and it leaves me with quite a dilemma in that if I move away from the [research] topics that have brought in the broad based research, then I'm left with 'how will we support [junior faculty and students]'? I think that this is a serious problem here...

An interesting reflection on the friction between connection and separation is shared by one full professor, having been a member of a fairly consistent group of colleagues for many years. She says, "We have a collective identity and individual identities that are forever being worked out...we don't spend as much time on [working things out] anymore...we found that when we met all the time, we just found more things to fuss about [with each other]." This professor acknowledges that, for the long-standing faculty, the separation has allowed for people to work together rather than constantly dealing with dynamics that "were really quite poisonous." At the same time, she has

great concern for this approach to "collegiality" and its effect on new faculty. A more junior woman comments on the relationships in her own department this way: "...most of our conflict is interpersonal. We have ten different people whose individualities are well established and reinforced by institutional settings."

While almost all of the faculty women voice similar concerns about separation, regardless of rank or time at the institution, few offer insights into how they are able to work through this to develop connections. One story is told of a women's faculty group that was established at one time by a new assistant professor to foster the connections between women in one of the professional schools. "Meetings" were held once a month over lunch to give an opportunity for sharing, acquaintanceship, and support. Initially, women were excited that someone took the initiative to get everyone together. But schedules began to conflict and one by one, the women stopped attending. One senior woman recently pondered, "Whatever happened to that group?" The woman who started the group said, matter-of-factly, "Nobody had time." It seems as though in spite of their concerns, the women faculty have resigned (or are in the process of resigning) themselves to an institutional way of knowing that is distinct from their own preferences.

Connected Knowing and Women Administrators

Administrative women at Swain State University are equally as frustrated by feelings of institutionally forced separation from a central culture and from each other as are their faculty counterparts. "The disadvantage of reporting directly to [the president] is that you don't belong in a meaningful way to [other units on campus.] We are physically and metaphorically on the edge of campus" one director offers. Another administrator in the same unit reinforces these perceptions when she says, "Our unit has interdependent relationships with the [president] but with other units, the relationship is weak, splintered." One director voices concerns of many when she says, "It's really difficult [in this system] to figure out where to be supportive, where to alleviate the pain for other people."

At the same time that they voice concerns of separation, administrative women speak about working to find means for establishing relationships and connections, almost in spite of the way in which they feel they are treated by the system. In sharing their perspectives on working through the University bureaucracies, two administrators reiterate the value they place on relationships with others. A director who has moved through many layers of administration at Swain State comments that, "The problem is if leadership at the top has not established an environment where we feel a sense of community, that we're in this together, then there's a risk of becoming fifedomes. You

only break that down based on personal relationships in other units. That's fine but it's a pretty tough way to run a business." A newer associate director offers, "You have to be willing to take on institutional barriers that impede [others'] progress. Motivation and assisting your staff members with their own personal development and professional development are the two keys to any director being good at what they do."

When thinking about office-wide action, apart from individual initiatives, women administrators see efforts being made to draw units closer to each other to support responsibilities and to maintain interpersonal connections. In speaking about a recent organizational change that was made to break down perceived barriers that led to feelings of isolation, an administrator shares, "The change in the relationship of our office to the [larger] campus was made in part because of an awareness of the interdependence of campus units and trying to figure out a way to maintain relationships." Within one division on campus, an assistant director puts the conflict between separation and connection this way, "We need to have parties involved to resolve conflict. Sometimes [we] try to resolve issues outside of [our] domain. You can't solve real problems in your own distinct groups. We need to have communication across groups...Units are supposed to work together for the good of the institution. In the end, we do, but the process between A and Z is often full of conflict."

It was assumed that, similar to the impact of the tenure and promotion processes on faculty, women administrators' ways of communicating and making decisions would be affected by the hierarchical power and authority structure associated with movement from assistant director to director to senior administrator. One could believe that the longer a woman is in an organizational system such as Swain State University, the more she becomes socialized to the rules of the game and the more likely she is to be promoted within the university system (Morrison, 1987). Following along these lines, we might also expect women administrators who have been at Swain State for a long time and/or who are trying to be promoted to be more likely to use the way of knowing that is reinforced by the system. Some women speak of having to change certain behaviors and preferred ways of being in order to participate in the system, to be included in decision making, and to be effective on the job. One associate director thinks about changes in the way she spends work time this way: "I spend a lot more time with the door open, even if I would be able to accomplish more with the door closed, simply because I don't want to be out of that [decision making] loop. I need to learn to be more direct."

More than the press for separation at Swain State, what seems to have a greater effect on these administrators are the limited opportunities for women to advance in this system and the impact of "stuckness" (Kanter, 1977) on their perceptions of self and

others. This is demonstrated in the way younger women view the lives of their predecessors in the system, and in the way senior women reflect on their lives. Women at lower levels of the institutional hierarchy are aware of many of the consequences for those in higher positions, in terms of opportunities for mobility and for connectedness. In observing the relationship between her director and that woman's supervisor, one woman comments, "She [the director] appears to be a middle manager who is caught. There are a lot of things the dean does that she doesn't necessarily appreciate or doesn't necessarily choose to emulate but she ends up doing it more because she doesn't want to cause friction in that relationship. And that's disappointing for her. I would hate to be in that position as well." In commenting on the perceived treatment of her own upper-level supervisor, another woman firmly states, "I don't think the university gives much credence to middle management, especially if they are women. They tell us what to do; they should be asking [her] what to do or at least be including her in the decisions. She knows how to get things done here. She must suffer frustration for the way things can be handled."

Women administrators who have been in the Swain State University system for many years corroborate the perceptions of more junior women in their own words and speak of the way in which being in the institution has caused them to think differently. In thinking about her professional opportunities at Swain State, one long-standing administrator says that there is not opportunity for advancement,

> "...if you meant upward...I had entertained that as a possibility earlier but looking at what I like to do, it isn't a feasible thing. Now moving on as to going somewhere else, working in a different kind of higher education environment, working in a smaller institution where I could be both higher up as well as connected with the artisan level of the institution, I consider those as possibilities...I try to develop some ties with other administrator types, but don't have much success doing that. My femaleness I think makes that difficult (most others are male)."

Another mid-level administrator reflects on the lack of opportunity for internal professional mobility and suggests, "I think you have to figure out some other things to do so you don't get too frustrated, too negative."

Most women administrators remain highly invested in connected knowing and in operating from a care perspective, in spite of institutional or departmental reinforcement for more separate behavior. "I don't stick to the bureaucratic chain of command...I will involve others," reflects one unit director. A senior administrator says, "I prefer to ground my [decisions] in consultation with key constituents." In describing a difficult

dilemma and its resolution, another woman administrator indicates that she knew the decisions made had been "correct" in that, "I got very positive responses from everyone and everyone felt good about it." Women administrators also commonly agree that managing change is one of the most difficult aspects of their job, not because of the change process itself, but because of the effect of change on interpersonal connection. As one offers, "Early on I had no appreciation for the effect of change on morale, etc. I didn't tune it to things that were manifestations of change anxiety. I make more of an effort to listen now..." One woman who holds a split academic and administrative appointment reflects on her decision to come to Swain State in this way, "I needed to feel I could be an integral part of a team as opposed to the low person [on the ladder]...The people here have been very good, very open-minded to me. I feel comfortable here. Decision making is based on values - very collegial. [The director] seems to be aware of the fact that it is very important to have a team and to get along." The care perspective may be best reflected in the brief statement made by one assistant director in describing her relationship with her supervisor. The woman states simply, " I make her laugh - it's healthy for her."

Reflections on the Academic Women at SSU

There were similarities and differences in the ways academic women make meaning at Swain State University. None of the women who shared their experiences are considered institutionally unsuccessful; none are in jeopardy of losing their jobs or being out of line for the next advancement opportunity. In most cases, the women all seem able to recognize the differences between institutional ways of knowing and their personal preferences, but not equally able to deal with the dissonance. In general, women administrators seem more successful at integrating, or at least protecting, their interdependence and connected way of knowing than the women faculty. Some even articulate an understanding of the necessity for both separate and connected knowing in a complex academic organization, such as Swain State, although these are usually women with greater institutional history and professional experience. On the other hand, for most of the women faculty, it is clear that the institutional preference for separate knowing has taken (and continues to take) its toll on their personal preference for connected knowing to the point that a majority speak openly of concern and frustration with this conflict. Women faculty of long-standing with the university speak comparably to their senior administrative colleagues, reflecting greater awareness of the compromises between separate and connected knowing.

There also appear to be differences in the organizational culture that most greatly affects women in a research university. Dissonance between feelings of connection and separation seems more influenced by the institutional culture and the department/division culture for administrators. Administrative women describe ways in which they work to change institutional barriers to foster connected knowing. They also speak of the importance of interpersonal ties within and across departments, of working to empower others, of care and nurturing others. The department culture appears to have a great influence on the way faculty women perceive themselves and their ability to maintain connections, yet they are equally if not more affected by the professional culture that supposedly drives the promotion and tenure system at Swain State. Faculty speak of trying to establish interpersonal ties but regularly return to the press of job expectations, the individual nature of their work, and the ways in which the system seems to reward separateness and isolation. These women speak of the hope that they will survive the struggle of separation and connection long enough to be allowed to return to their preferred way of knowing (often following a tenure or promotion decision). In general, the administrators seem more able to work with and to rise above the institutional culture; the women faculty seem consumed by it. The male dominance of the administrative structure in this research university and what is reinforced in this system seems to have a negative effect on the women administrators at Swain State University; yet, the negative impact and the dissonance between separation and connection seems even greater when a strong male-dominated professional culture is added to the mix, as it is for women faculty here.

It should be added that, had more senior women faculty been involved with this study, the perspectives may have been somewhat different and the conflicts more resolved since it appears that institutional promotion and reward structures/processes are significant reinforcers of separate knowing for faculty. There are so few of these faculty women in the study, however, that it might be premature to conclude that all would view the institutional world similarly. As in other research universities, there are fewer senior women faculty at Swain State to volunteer to participate in studies than there are assistant or associate women professors. Still, it seems that as these women full professors are able to move out from under the institution's cultural press, as supported through university promotion and reward structures, they are able to work towards more balanced knowing. Senior faculty and long-standing administrators seem to be the closest to Lyons' and Gilligan's idea of constructed knowing, presumably having learned to work with (or more likely, through) the Swain State system to maintain their interdependence and connections.

When we think of glass ceilings for women in educational organizations, we often focus primarily on the ability to get promoted and to advance to the next level, be it in administration or faculty life. This study tries to illuminate what might be an equally important struggle facing women in organizations that operate according to traditional male norms, values, and ways of knowing. The powerlessness associated with feeling forced to adopt a voice and way of knowing contrary to one's preference is not often the focus of our research, yet may be central to retention and vitality of women, and men, in collegiate systems. This paper begins the exploration of the connection between institutional culture and ways of meaning making as perceived by a group of women at one research university. Perhaps as importantly, this study reminds us that language and the communication of meaning are central to understandings of women and men, and can be critically addressed by utilizing frameworks which focus on these elements rather than marginalizing them in favor of more objective criteria.

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